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Under the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the highly qualified requirement is removed effective July 1, 2016. Idaho will move to one system that meets applicable state certification and licensure requirements including any requirements for alternative routes to certification.

The term "highly qualified teacher" (HQT) is not included in ESSA. Effective immediately, districts are no longer required to identify and document HQT status for teachers hired **after December 10, 2015**.

Teachers hired **before December 10** for the 2015–16 school year are required to be highly qualified. Districts should continue HQT reporting in ISEE for the rest of the 2015–16 school year. The HQT status of long-term substitutes (certificated teachers who serve as substitutes for four or more consecutive weeks in a single assignment) and contracted teachers employed by third-party vendors must also be reported.

Moving forward, the SDE will continue to monitor teacher qualifications through the Title II, Part A office and collect data about the certification, endorsements, teaching assignments, and years of experience.

ESSA amends the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act provision at 20 USC 1412 (a)(14)(C). Special education teachers must have a bachelor's degree and must either be certificated in special education or hold a special education license in Idaho. These requirements cannot be waived.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is the primary agency charged with overseeing K–12 education in Idaho. Led by State School Superintendent Sherri Ybarra, the State Department of Education works with the state's 115 school districts, 48 charter schools, and 1 COSSA to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than 294,131 public and charter school students.

Idaho continues to support hiring teachers that demonstrate content mastery. ISDE will review the state's current certification requirements during the 2016-2017 school year. In moving to one system, changes may be made to ensure that all teachers demonstrate content mastery in their assignments.

The ISDE will continue to keep LEAs updated in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherri Ybarra".

Sherri Ybarra
Superintendent of Public Instruction